



**Acacia Team Meeting
April - May 2002
Evaluation**

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Introduction and Background

The second Acacia PI team meeting, took place in the beautiful surroundings of the Aberdare Country Club Nyeri, Kenya, from Monday 29th to Wednesday May 1st.

There were a total of twelve participants (see list in Annex). Each of the 12 participants was expected to complete an eleven-item meeting evaluation questionnaire (see Annex 1 attached). Eleven participants returned evaluations. One participant made an early departure before the conclusion of the meeting to attend to other official duties.

Response Patterns

Qualitative responses are reproduced verbatim to retain their richness and originality and average scores have been calculated for the quantitative ones. The analysis is done by item since the items were not too many and the report follows the plan and structure of a similar report prepared in 2001 (Fuchs, R.) also for a similar meeting.

In response to the first item, which asked participants the three things they liked **MOST** about the meeting, the following statements were made:

*“Meeting colleagues/team, Team spirit (mentioned by three participants), Team camaraderie, Bonding, Friendly
Being inspired and motivated by acacia’s work
The Regional Director, RD’s presence and insightful comments and inputs, Local (ESARO) Support (RD and Gladys)
Learning more about Acacia and its program
Having an opportunity to contribute to Acacia’s success
The venue, wonderful scenery
Substantive discussions on transnational issues and PI directions
Information sharing
Getting a bigger picture – strategizing
Decision taking, flexibility and participation
Having face-to-face time with each other
Dividing up the pot - getting a hold of the money, the great leadership delegation manner of both RF and EA
Discussions, exchange, transparency
Documentation*

Meeting other team members
Prioritisation of dissemination/closing the loop/Communication in agenda
Cross regional learning
Well organized and focused on objectives/content
Opportunity for in-depth understanding of program directions, Team in-put,
Quick”

Three things least liked;

“Not enough time, too much on agenda, tight agenda and difficult to respect timing, time limit, moving too often, Not enough time to cover agenda items
The rain
Not enough online access
Uncertainty about personnel issues i.e. .how maternity leave will be dealt with, Uganda project Officer
No discussions about how to inform partners about meeting decisions
More time to discuss project ideas
Not very clear work planning and pipeline not successfully finalized
Would suggest professional facilitation and independent to the team
No Internet connection!
Sometimes discussions shallow because time insufficient
Consensus not pursued sometimes imposed”

Item Ranking:

Participants were asked to rank six dimensions of the meeting using a 10-point scale with 10 being the highest score.

The table below presents the responses, which place the venue as the star dimension and, timing a key dimension of meetings, was given the lowest score both of which are highlighted in the table. The nature/wildlife visits, with the lowest score, were arranged to provide a break from the meeting but the weather was not very favourable.

Item	Participant Scores											Average
Venue	10	10	9	7	10	9	7	10	10	10	9	9.2
Content	9	10	10	8	8	10	9	10	9	-	9	8.4
Visits	3	-	-	7	-	8	2	4	5	-	-	2.6
Facilitation	7	10	8	8	9	9	7	9	9	6	9	8.3
Timing	8	5	-	6	8	10	6	8	7	9	9	6.9
Closure/ Conclusions	7	10	-	8	9	9	7	9	9	7	9	7.6

All the participants indicated that they would wish to participate in other such meetings in the future citing the following reasons:

“Helps team planning

It is an important momentum for team work and strengthens team spirit

Because it is useful and essential for working efficiently

Useful to share ideas and hear what others are doing which might influence own work

As a team member to learn from colleagues and to meet face-to-face

Team development, work plan activity

The meeting and the process give insight into the programming process, places programming within context

Opportunity to reflect on programming, work process and allows team interaction

Absolutely necessary to have a full team meeting at least once a year

Fundamental to our work

Great learning exercise”

Participants were asked to state what aspects of the meeting they would **change/drop** or **retain/maintain** were it to be held again:

Three of the eleven participants would **change nothing** and those who would, identified the under-listed as changes they would like to see.

“Crowded agenda, rushed discussions,

A tight agenda for 2 days (it is not enough)

Time constraints, traveling too often (we loose time) extend length of meeting (for discussion of issues)

Invite the Ugandan Project Officer inform how maternity leave will be dealt with

Need at least one PO to lead a content issue, opportunity to tell content not just talk about work plan, need more time for pipeline organization, trip to venue too far

Work planning process (have it done in advance in a simpler format e.g. using last FY's work plan)

Time allocated (more time)

Would spend more time on work plan and general discussion, would implement better facilitation less presentations more interaction

More reps from other IDRC Divisions (e.g. ITMD), 3 days, integrate with project visits.

The following aspects would be **retained/maintained**:

"Content, timing

The agenda (programme content)

Inclusive nature of participation, venue was great

Right timing excellent

Excellent provision of materials before the meeting

Programming issues, global regional contextual understanding

More team building time, participation of all especially Ottawa staff (Luis, RF + Chantal) and bring evaluation unit also!

Changing agenda to meet needs, comraderie, balance for discussion

Open meeting to other participants, content

Great venue, visits (but better)

Discussion on global /transnational issues, Update on programs/PI directions and achievements, presentation and discussion on regional issues"

The entire meeting experience was given an average score of 7.6 out of 10 and participants were unanimous that the meeting was a success and all personal expectations for the meeting were met. However additional comments were made namely:

"Improvement of timing in order to avoid a too tight agenda which does not allow much time for discussions

Good meeting, great venue

Leave sometime for discussion of general issues on ICT4D (Telecoms, education, etc.)

Where possible visit to a local appropriate project for group learning

Seems like we have a wining team

Well organized

Would encourage improved online exchange before the meeting, I would strongly encourage that the project information/pipeline is reviewed shortly

before the meeting (online) and /or more time is spent on this activity (thank you very much for this fine meeting)

Maybe 1 or 2 outside presenters

Lear timelines were not given”

The following **agenda items were suggested** by 8 participants for the follow-up meeting planned for June in Ottawa:

- 1. ~~LCAD~~ ➤ Focus on global activities (Linkages with PAN Amaricas)
- X ➤ Acacia 3
- LCAD ➤ Open source (what it means for us)
- LCAD ➤ Facilitate information @ infoservices available (OPA, IDRIS, WCMS, etc)
- ✓ ➤ Acacia Conference
- ✓ ➤ Time to discuss our projects (WARO, EARO, SARO)
- LCAD ➤ Discussion of MAP (Internet Out of Africa, Jensen/IDRC, 2002)
- ✓ ➤ As highlighted during meeting + Small grants project modus operandi
- ✓ ➤ Follow-up of NePAD issues
- ✓ ➤ Address upcoming issues (conference, publications)
- ✓ ➤ Final work plan

ANNEX 1

Evaluation Acacia Team Meeting April - May 2002

1. The three things I **liked most** about the meeting:
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 -
 -
2. Three things I **liked least** about the meeting:
 -
 -
 -
3. On scale out of 10 (10 highest score) I would rank (-) as:

- Venue	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
-Content	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
-Facilitation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
-Timing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
-Closure/Conclusions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4. I Would_____ Would Not_____ want to participate in this type of meeting again.
Why?_____
5. If this meeting was to hold again, I would **maintain** the following exactly as they were.
 -
 -
6. If this meeting was to hold again, I would **drop** or **change** the following:
 -
 -
7. On a scale out of 10 I would give the overall experience of the entire meeting a _____?
8. In my opinion the meeting: a) Succeeded
b) Did not succeed with the stated objectives
9. Any other observations you'd like to share with the organizers?
(Pls use reverse side)

Thank you.

Meeting Participants:

Edith Adera (ESARO), Luis Barnola (Ottawa), Alioune Camara (WARO) , Laurent Elder (WARO), Heloise Emdon , SARO), Florence Etta (ESARO), CF- Connie Freeman (ESARO) , Richard Fuchs (Ottawa), Gladys Githaiga (ESARO), Marielle Rowan (Project Officer, Mozambique), Chantal Schryer (Communications, Ottawa) Ramata Molo Thioune (WARO)